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UNCLAS DHAKA 000514

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: STRIKE SITREP

1. (SBU) After a day's pause, the Awami League renewed its hartal (strike) program with a dawn-to-dusk hartal on February 3. With a comparatively heavier police presence, observers as of 1600 local report slightly more rickshaws and motor vehicles on Dhaka streets compared to the previous program but that nearly all of Dhaka's shops are closed.

2. (SBU) By mid morning, one car had been burnt and several AL women protesters had been arrested, but there have been few large AL street demonstrations and no injuries reported. As of 1300 local, the only fatality was a police officer who suffered an apparent heart attack when he aided the extinguishing of the car fire.

3. (SBU) Awami League Member of Parliament Muhammad Faruk Khan told us that the hartal was widely observed and therefore a "success." Reports from around the country are mixed, with the hartal widely observed in the AL stronghold of Bandarban, located in east Bangladesh, but loosely observed elsewhere.

4. (SBU) The Awami League plans a 36 hour hartal from dawn February 5 to dusk February 6. Their leftist partners, who had announced previously they would not participate out of respect for SAARC, have not yet announced whether they will now participate but have said they would hold public demonstrations in support.
THOMAS